SOME NEW BOOKS.

German Humor.

In an octavo volume of 430 pages Mr. HANS MÜLLER-CASENOV has collected and translated a large number of examples of *The Humor of Germany* (Scribner's). Of course no such repertory of extracts was ever completely satisfactory, even to the author. The abundance of material from which to choose and the narrow space at his disposal compel him to omit many characteristic excerpts, which, as he knows, may seem to many of his readers more worthy of selection than some which he has included in his volume. On the whole, however, in this instance the work of the compiler has been well performed, almost every type and phase of German humor being happily illustrated. We cannot say as much for the translation, so far as the poetry is concerned. Especially is the attempt to render certain lines of Heine into English verse a failure. The versions of the prose extracts are better done, though here also either the translator or the proof reader is chargeable with a good many blunders.

I.

We can agree with many things, but must disagree with some things that the compiler says in the introduction where he essays the difficult task of defining humor in general and German humor in particular. Mr. Müller-Casenov does not seem to have a clear conception of the fundamental difference between wit and humor. Primarily, wit is simply concerned with the mode of expression. Conceivably one may be witty in discussing the laws of gravitation, the roots of a dead language, or a problem in Euclid. This assertion is made good by Butler in his "Hudibras." But one cannot be humorous in propounding or elucidating abstract ideas. Humor does not necessarily involve the command of epigrammatic or felicitous expression, but it does always imply that a certain kind of subject is submitted to observation, and that it is considered from a certain point of view. The subject is always human nature, or the nature of those animals in whom approximations to human nature may be detected or pretended, and the view-point is always that of searching comprehension and lively sympathy. When one defines humor in this way, one sees at a glance why the command of it and the command of pathos are always united in the same person. Of sympathy, humor and pathos are, indeed, twin children; the welling tear and the charitable, indulgent smile are but different emblems of an emotion substantially identical. The man who is said to have the gift of humor, like him who used to be described as the man of feeling, is he who, in the first place, has made a close and candid study of himself, and who, perhaps for that very reason, when he looks outward, is best able to put himself in another's place.

If we adopt such a definition of humor, it should be easy to discriminate between the national types of it. In a race, or people, which, by inherited instinct, is most introspective, and which, in domestic and social relations, evinces most humanity and sympathy, we should look for the development of humor in the most incisive and illuminative yet kindly form. The rule may be laid down that the nation whose master works of letters or of art appeal most powerfully to the feeling of pity can also most effectively rouse the sense of humor. The Greeks, for instance, whose sway over the graver emotions has never been surpassed, produced also masterpieces of humor in the plays of Aristophanes and the dialogues of Lucian. On the other hand, the traditional conception of the Roman character seems to exclude the exhibition either of intense compassion or of a keen susceptibility to the humorous aspects of human life and character. As a matter of fact, there is scarcely a trace of humor in Latin literature, outside of Plautus; for what humorous strokes there are in Terence are notoriously borrowed from the Greeks. If the modern Italians and the modern French were as closely related by blood to the Romans as their languages are to the Latin, we should expect to discover as little evidence of humor in their literatures. But in both peoples there is a strong infusion of the Teutonic spirit, while in France the root of the national character is Celtic, which, as we recognize in Ireland, where we see it almost intact, is preëminently associated with a capacity for pathos on the one hand and humor on the other. If to Englishmen German humor seems more intelligible and enjoyable than any other, it is because the fundamental features of the English race and language are still essentially Low German. The Englishman, like the Teuton, is a serious person, and, although less demonstrative than his kinsman, he is at bottom extremely sympathetic. The wit of Heine, for example, his extraordinary power and play of expression, has never been better comprehended than it is in France. But it is probable that, outside of his own countrymen, only Englishmen appreciate the subtlety, the delicacy, the depth, and the pathetic quality of his humor. Of Heine, as of Sterne, it may be said that he sometimes seems to smile through tears, that his humor has a visible background of sorrow; but the specific trait of the German sentimentalist is his custom of chasing away a tear, when on the point of falling, by an abrupt and merry laugh.

It is satisfactory to learn that the publishers of this book have also brought out two volumes, respectively entitled, "The Humor of France" and the "Humor of Italy." We hope that these will be supplemented by other compilations exemplifying the humor of Spain, the humor of Ireland, and the humor of Russia.

II.

We shall illustrate the scope and the value of the book before us, mainly by extracts from Richter, Heine, Bogumil Goltz, and Julius Stettenheim, to which may be added, if we have space, instances of university and newspaper humor. We would begin, however, with an extract from a metrical translation of a fable written by Hugo von Trimberg, who lived in the last half of the thirteenth century. It is evident that under the figures of the wolf, the fox, and the ass, the author is depicting the parts played in mediæval society by the nobles, the clergy, and the common people. According to this fable, the wolf and the fox, being on a pilgrimage to Rome, overtook the ass, and thenceforth the three fared forward together. Presently the wolf, however, suggested that it might spare the Pope some trouble if the three pilgrims confessed each other. He proposed accordingly that each should describe his greatest sin, and so, passing over trifles, he acknowledged the one deed that gave his conscience pain.

"'Tis this—there dwelt beside the Rhine
A man who lived by feeding swine.
He had a sow who rambled wide
While all her pigs with hunger cried,
I punished her in such a way
That never more she went astray.
Her little ones, deserted now,
Oft moved my pity, I'll avow;
I ended all their woes one night—
Now let my punishment be light!"

"Well," said the Fox, "your sin was small,
And hardly can for penance call;
For such a venial transgression
You've made amends by this confession.
And now I'll do as you have done—
Of all my sins I'll name but one:
A man such noisy fowls would keep,
That no one near his house could sleep;
The crowings of his chanticleer
Disturbed the country far and near.
Distracted by the noise, one night
I went and stopped his crowing quite.
But this feat ended not the matter—
The hens began to crow and chatter;
And so (the deed I slightly rue)
I killed them and their chickens, too."

"Well," said the Wolf, "to hush that din
Was surely no alarming sin;
Abstain from poultry for three days,
And, if you like, amend your ways.
But now the Ass must be confessed.
Donkey! how far have you transgressed?"

"Ah!" said the Ass, with dismal bray,
"You know I have not much to say;
For I have toiled from day to day,
And done for master service good,
In carrying water, corn, and wood.
But once, in winter time, 'tis true,
I did what I perhaps must rue:
A countryman, to keep him warm
(We had just then a snowy storm),
Had put some straw into his shoes;
To bite it I could not refuse;
And so (for hunger was my law)
I took, or stole, a single straw."

"There! say no more!" the Fox exclaimed;
"For want of straw that man was lamed;
His feet were bitten by the frost;
'Tis probable his life was lost.
'Twas theft and murder—No reply!
Your penance is, that you must die."

III.

In the following extract Jean Paul Friedrich Richter discusses the influence of the passion of love upon the female sex and proposes a division of labor in matters sentimental. "Love," says Richter, "is the perihelion of women—Ay, it is the transit of an earthly Venus through the sun of the ideal world. During this period of their highest refinement of soul they love whatever we love, even though it be science and the best world of beauty within us: and they despise whatever we despise, even though it be dress and gossip.

"These nightingales sing up to the date of the summer solstice; their marriage day is their longest day. The devil does not take their power of song all at once, but piecemeal day by day. The firm bands of wedlock tie up the wings of poesy: to the free play of fancy marriage means imprisonment on bread and water. Many a time I have followed about one of these poor birds of paradise or peacocks or Psyches during their honeymoon, and picked up the moulted feathers that were strewn about; and when later the husband complained that he had taken unto himself a bald and unlovely bird, I would show him the wasted treasure. Why is this? Because marriage erects a crust of reality about the ideal world: it is much the same case as with the sphere we live on, which, according to Descartes, is a sun enveloped in an earthy shell. A woman lacks the power which a man has to protect the inner structures of air and fancy against the encroachments of the rough outside. Where shall she seek refuge? In her natural keeper. A man should ever stand guard with a spoon over the fluid silver of the feminine intellect, to remove the scum as it rises, that the core of the ideal may shine the brighter. But there are two kinds of men: the Arcadians or lyric poets of life, who love forever, like Rousseau when his hair was gray; second, there are the boorish shepherds of to-day, the plebeian poetasters and practical men of business, who thank God when their enchantress, like other enchantresses, changes into a growling cat, and keeps the house free from vermin."

Richter goes on to show how little adapted men of the latter class are to love-making and how glad they should be to perform that function by proxy.

"No one suffers from greater *ennui* and anxiety than a fat, weighty, slouching, bass-voiced man of business, who, like the Roman elephants of former times, is called upon to dance upon the slender rope of love, and whose amorous pantomimes always remind me of dormice, that seem to be at a loss about their every movement when sudden warmth interrupts their dormant state. Only with widows, who care less to be loved than to be married, can a heavy man of business begin his romance where the novelists end theirs—viz., at the steps of the altar. Such a man, constructed on the crudest style, would have a load off his mind if he could get some one to love his shepherdess in his name until there was nothing more to be done but to have the wedding; the taking upon myself of such crosses and burdens for another is just what I should feel a calling for. I have often thought of advertising in the public papers (had I not feared it might be taken for a joke), that I offer myself to serve as plenipotentiary to any man of business who has no time to properly make love to a girl."

IV.

In all of Heine's writings there is none better calculated to exhibit the peculiar sudden turns and elusive flavor of his humor than the passage reproduced in this volume wherein he recalls his youth and education. Referring to the method of instruction at the school in which he was a pupil, he recalls that everything was got by heart—"The Roman Kings, chronology, Greek, Hebrew, geography, German, mental arithmetic—Lord! My head is still giddy with it! All must be learned by heart. And much of it was eventually to my advantage. For had I not learned the Roman Kings by heart it would subsequently have been a matter of perfect indifference to me whether Niebuhr had or had not proved that they never really existed." As for the Latin, he tells the lady to whom he is recounting these reminiscences that she "really can have no idea how muddled it is. The Romans would never have found time to conquer the world if they had been obliged first to learn Latin. Those happy people knew in their cradles the nouns with an accusative in *im*. * * * It went better in Hebrew, for I always had a great predilection for the Jews, although they to this very hour have crucified my good name; but I never could get so far in Hebrew as my watch, which had an intimate intercourse with pawnbrokers, and in consequence acquired many Jewish habits—for instance, it would not go on Saturday. * * * Meanwhile I learned much more German, and that is not such child's play. For we poor Germans who have already been sufficiently plagued with soldiers quartered on us, military duties, poll taxes, and a thousand other exactions, must needs over and above all this torment each other with accusatives and datives. * * *

"I succeeded better in natural history, for there we find fewer changes, and we always have standard engravings of apes, kangaroos, zebras, rhinoceroses, &c. And having many such pictures in my memory, it often happens that at first sight many mortals appear to me like old acquaintances.

"I did well in mythology; I took real delight in the mob of gods and goddesses who ruled the world in joyous nakedness. I do not believe that there was a schoolboy in ancient Rome who knew the chief articles of his catechism—that is, the loves of Venus—better than I. To tell the truth, it seems to me that if we must learn all the heathen gods by heart, we might as well have kept them from the first; and we have not perhaps made so much out of our new Roman Trinity, or even our Jewish monotheism. Perhaps that mythology was not in reality so immoral as we imagine, and it was, for example, a very decent thought of Homer's to give the much-loved Venus a husband. * * *

"But I succeeded best of all in the French class of the Abbé d'Aulnoi, a French *émigré*, who had written a number of grammars, and wore a red wig, and jumped about very nervously when he recited his *Art poetique* and his *Histoire Allemande*. He was the only man in the whole gymnasium who taught German history. Still French has its difficulties, and many bitter words came in. I remember still, as though it happened yesterday, the scrapes I got into through *la religion*. Six times came the question: 'Henri, what is the French for "the faith"?' And six times, ever more tearfully, I replied: 'It is called *le crédit*.' And at the seventh question, with a deep cherry-red face, my furious examiner cried, 'It is called *la religion*,' and there was a rain of blows, and all my school fellows laughed. Madame, since that day I can never hear the word *religion* but my back turns pale with terror and my cheeks red with shame. And to speak truly, *le crédit* has during my life stood me in better stead than *la religion*. *Parbleu*, madame, I have succeeded well in French. I understand not only *patois*, but even aristocratic nurse-maid French."

Heine goes on to say that he learned perhaps as much from a French drummer as from any other instructor, and that until he heard that man drum he never understood the story of the taking of the Bastille, of the Tuileries, and the like. "In our school compendiums of history we merely read how 'their Highnesses the Dukes and Princes, with the most noble spouses of the aforesaid, were beheaded. His Majesty the King, with his most sublime spouse the Queen, had their heads cut off.' But when you hear the red guillotine march drummed you understand it correctly for the first time, and you know the how and the why, Madame. It is indeed a wonderful march. It thrilled through marrow and bone when I first heard it, and I was glad when I forgot it."

The recollection of the guillotine march, *Ça ira*, by one of those abrupt transitions from humor to pathos and back again to humor, which are characteristic of Heine, brings back a scene in a lecture room at Göttingen, where Napoleon, after his downfall, was roundly berated by a certain Professor Saalfeld. "How could I," asks Heine, who had been the pupil of a man who had drummed through the Revolution and the Empire, "hear the Emperor cursed? The Emperor, the Emperor, the great Emperor! The Emperor is dead. On a waste island in the Atlantic Ocean is his grave; and he for whom the world was too narrow lies quietly under a little hillock, where five weeping willows hang their green heads, and a little brook, murmuring sorrowfully, ripples by. There is no inscription on his tomb; but Clio, with a just pen, has written thereon invisible words which will resound, like spirit tones, through thousands of years.

"Britannia! the sea is thine. But the sea has not water enough to wash away the shame with which the death of that mighty one has covered thee. And he was thy guest, and had seated himself by thy hearth.

"Strange! A terrible destiny has already overtaken the three greatest enemies of the Emperor. Londonderry has cut his throat, Louis XVIII. has rotted away on his throne, and Prof. Saalfeld is still professor in Göttingen."

V.

Bogumil Goltz, whom we may almost consider a contemporary, since he did not die until 1870, was a man of fortune, who, although born in Warsaw, studied at the University of Breslau, and attained a high rank among German humorists. His point of view is even more modern than that of Heine, and his insight, searching as it is, was never divorced from the kindliness and charity which are inseparable from true humor as distinguished from satire. Of his characteristic vein no better example could be given than the passage cited in this volume, from which we reproduce some extracts. The author is discoursing upon woman, and one can see that, while pretending to vilipend them, he really adores them.

"In his relation to woman man is always more or less of a fool, whether he be their husband, lover, councillor, or friend. He explains the same thing to them over and over again; he declares, he demonstrates with a will; he would have it thus and so, because only in this wise, and at such a time, will it fulfil his purpose; he points the argument and he grounds it with such explicitness that a very sign post would strike root at listening to him. For a moment the lady fears the threatening storm; but as for the mental effect, the effect which the argument should make as such, which truth should make as truth—for that her ladyship has no respect; indeed, she does not even respect law and justice with all her heart, but only under compulsion, and driven thereto by despair.

"Man may talk as much as he pleases; the spoken word exerts no potent influence over a genuine woman. So long as her emotions are strongly affected, the whole line of argumentation to which the spoken word gives expression seems to her but a piece of academical man-invented pedantry—the learned twaddle of the schools. She inclineth not her ear to reasons; she considers them an intolerable imposition, an encroachment upon the realm of her sentiment and the supremacy of her feminine intuition. Her logic is passion; she feels but her mood, her interest; she sees things and relations but as they regard her personally. Whether there is an injustice to others implied, and what is the true import of things *per se*, all that is rarely comprehended and retained by a woman, where her interest or her antipathy comes into play. In the entire course of the clearest and concisest exposition the fair listener is occupied only with her excitement and opposition, and never with the subject in question and its importance. The spoken word, as soon as she is required to acknowledge its office as bearer and representative of intellect, to value its absolute potency, is to her but empty sound. At the last she may yield to pathos—to emphasis, to oratory, as she might do at a play. The dialectics affect her possibly by their eloquence, diction, and pictorial qualities, but rarely by their cogency. When all arguments are exhausted, and the speaker looks forward to the effect for the sake of which he has marshalled all his rhetorical art and logic, and taken his eloquence into both hands, as it were, madam comes back to the same fatal point, to the same nonsense from whence she started, and all the forces of rhetoric, all the concentrated reasoning goes for nothing."

Goltz goes on to show how in presence of an interlocutor so refractory a man's temper rises, and he waxes indignant, although he is certain to be told that it is quite unnecessary to raise his voice and get in a passion about nothing:

"The quietest, most serene of men must despair when there is no appealing to human reason. But madam *shall* be convinced. He counts again the serried syllogisms on trembling fingers, with flashing eyes and tremulous lips, with a voice half suppressed by rage; every word is accentuated as if it were to conjure up spirits and wake the dead. Arguments are applied like thumbscrews, the entire demonstration is held up menacingly like a pistol with trigger drawn; she is accused of not possessing reason, and in the next moment it is demanded of her, as one demands the evidence of his five senses from a person suspicious of insanity. Madam is asked to declare, brief and plain, whether she has understood; she is not to say what she will do or not do; the matter under discussion and its fulfilment is to remain secondary; the man wants naught but the satisfaction of an acknowledgment that he is right, that his better half possesses and respects human reason. All material interest is to be set aside; her ladyship shall have quite her own way; it is only demanded that there be a declaration in the interest of truth, of logic, of human dignity; but of this the fair sufferer in the cause of non-reason is not capable; it is asking too much of her feminine nature; it breaks her heart. She feels herself ill-treated; in her excitement she has heard nothing but words, and, like a tragedy queen, she has been occupied only with her grief. She comprehends naught but her boundless misery, and the axiomatic barbarity of the genus man. And the tears she has long repressed burst forth, washing away demonstrations, syllogisms, and all; *that is a woman's logic*. Nature will not be forced, and least of all woman nature. Dosed with argumentation and logic, it loses appetite, fulness, wit, complexion, grace, amiability, and vivacity."

VI.

Julius Stettenheim, who was born at Hamburg some sixty years ago, and is now living at Berlin, is best known as the editor of the *Wespen* and the *Humoristishes Deutschland*. Among innumerable humorous compositions, perhaps the most successful has been his "War Correspondence," parts of which are translated in the book before us. We reproduce the editorial introduction to the letters and two of the epistles which subsequently passed:

"The natural and justifiable mistrust which the reading public brings to bear upon published reports from military headquarters has caused us to send our extra special correspondent, Herr Wippchen, whose presence has already graced several official festivities at the porter brewery, as well as two general assemblies of the Architects' Club, to be an eyewitness upon the field occupied just now by the Oriental question.

"No sooner was our intention made public than four managers of the most renowned life insurance companies applied to us, declaring their willingness to insure the life of Herr Wippchen against all the dangers of war upon the most reasonable conditions.

"Yesterday, at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, Herr Wippchen set out on his journey, favored by the most glorious weather. In the evening we had his first report from Bernau (a small town near Berlin), which we here publish:

"'BERNAU, May 3, 1877.

"'After travelling for two hours I arrived here, and in this friendly little town I found rooms far from the deafening noise of the railway, where I can devote myself with leisure to my task. It is my purpose to give you a battle of some dimensions every day. Certain it is that the position of Bernau is decidedly favorable to my enterprise, for not only is it possible to take the train for the battlefield twice a day, but also to write to Berlin much more frequently.

"'On the train it was the opinion of many that the die had been cast, and that the temple of Janus would not be sheathed again for weeks to come. Indeed, at the "Kaiserhof," the night before we left, we were quite unanimous about that.

"'I am sorry to say that I am not supplied with the necessary maps. The geography I had when I went to school is rather old, and the map of Turkey is partly torn out.

"'It was a capital idea to send me here. There is no denying the fact that a war correspondent should not be constantly seen in the streets of the city where his reports are printed. * * * I enclose my first letter from the battlefield, and at the same time I would ask you to send me a couple of those new gold five-mark pieces which the inhabitants of Bernau are anxious to see.'"

There follow for a time at regular intervals descriptions of appalling battles between the Turks and Russians, forwarded from Bernau. Then ensues a prolonged silence, which provokes not only suspicion, but the following remonstrance on the part of the editor:

"*To Herr Wippchen at Bernau:*

"Since the 3d you have not sent us a single skirmish, for we presume you do not expect us to look upon your request for a further remittance, with which we unfortunately complied, in the light of a war report. You seem to take the Oriental complication as an opportunity to live in the country at our expense. Do you think this is acting like our own correspondent? If so, you mistake. If we do not receive one of the bloodiest battles by return post, we shall look about for another war correspondent. It was only yesterday that one of the profession offered his services, declaring his readiness to furnish us with war at five pfennige a line. We wish to bring this to your notice, saluting you in the firm expectation of a desperate conflict. Yours cordially,"

M. W. H.

Sea Power in History.

We reviewed at some length in these columns the book in which Capt. A. T. MAHAN, U. S. N., discussed the influence of sea power upon history during the period from 1660 to 1783. A continuation of that work is now presented by the author in two volumes collectively entitled, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire*. (Boston, Little, Brown & Co.) The epoch covered by the present narrative begins in 1793 and ends in 1812, a date made memorable by Napoleon's invasion of Russia, and by the outbreak of war between Great Britain and the United States. To the latter contest Capt. Mahan promises to devote a special study. We should note at the outset that in the book before us and in the preceding work the author's purpose is to analyze the strategic conduct of naval campaigns as well as the tactical features of the various battles in which any clear tactical aim was exhibited, and ultimately to measure the effect of success at sea on the net outcome of international contests. The first volume of this history, with which for the moment we are exclusively concerned, begins with a survey of European navies in 1793 and proceeds to review in detail the maritime operations of the English and French navies in the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the British Channel, and the Mediterranean, including the great sea fight between Lord Howe and Villaret Joyeuse and the famous battles of Cape St. Vincent and of the Nile, and finally the French expeditions against Ireland. From whatever point of view, technical or general, this narrative may be regarded, it will be acknowledged that the author has produced a work of remarkable interest and abiding value.

I.

What was the condition of the French and English navies on Feb. 1, 1793, when the French republic declared war against Great Britain? It is customary to say that the complete overthrow of the sea power of France under the revolution and the empire should be attributed to the unwise action of the French Governments which succeeded one another after 1789. It was, we are told, because the Governments so faithfully and necessarily reflected the social disorder, the crude and wild habits of thought which they were powerless to check, that they were incapable of dealing with the naval necessities of the day. But why were the political and social conditions which proved so favorable to the evolution of French power on land so fatal to maritime efficiency? Why, when the army speedily became so strong, was the navy so weak, not merely or chiefly in quantity but in quality—and that, too, in days so nearly succeeding the prosperous naval era of Louis XVI? Why should the same throe which brought forth the magnificent land forces of Napoleon have caused the complete dissolution of the sister service, not only amid the disorders of the republic, but also under the powerful organization of the empire. According to Capt. Mahan, the immediate reason for this difference was that to a service of a very special character, involving special exigencies calling for special aptitudes, and consequently demanding special knowledge of its requirements, were applied the theories of men ignorant of those requirements—men who did not even believe in the existence of special qualifications. Entirely without experimental knowledge or any other kind of knowledge of the conditions of sea life, the legislators of the Convention and of the Directory and of the Consulate, were unable to realize the obstacles to the processes by which they desired to build up their navy, and according to which they proposed to handle it. This was true not only of the rude experiments made in the early days of the republic; the reproach may as fairly be addressed to Napoleon himself that he had at the outset scarcely any appreciation of the factors conditioning efficiency at sea; nor did he seemingly ever reach such comprehension of them as would enable him to understand why the French navy failed. "Disdaining," said Jean Bon Saint-André, the revolutionary Commissioner whose influence on naval organization was unbounded, "disdaining through calculation and reflection skilful evolutions, perhaps our seamen will think it more fitting and useful to try those boarding actions in which the Frenchman was always incomparable, and thus astonish Europe by new prodigies of valor." To the same effect wrote Capt. Chevalier. "Courage and audacity," he said, "had become in his (Napoleon's) eyes the only qualities necessary to our officers." "The English," said Napoleon, "will become very small when France shall have two or three Admirals willing to die." Upon this conception of naval warfare the ill-fated Admiral Villeneuve made the following comment: "Since his Majesty thinks that nothing but audacity and resolve are needed to succeed in the naval officer's calling, I shall leave nothing to be desired."

II.

Capt. Mahan traces in detail the steps by which the fine naval service which had been created in France under Louis XVI. was broken down, and he also examines the ultimate effect of maritime incapacity upon the French empire. The overwhelming destruction of the sea-power of France and Spain at Trafalgar was undoubtedly a principal factor in the final results attained at Leipsic and at Waterloo. It was the eventual ascendancy of the British navy, due to the immense physical loss and yet more to the moral annihilation of that of the enemy, which enabled Great Britain to assume the offensive in the Iberian Peninsula after the Spanish uprising, an offensive absolutely dependent upon a control of the sea. The presence of a British army in Portugal and Spain kept festering an ulcer which drained the resources of Napoleon's empire. In expounding the causes of the decadence of the French marine the author has a practical as well as an historical purpose. Although the circumstances under which the process of decay began were undoubtedly exceptional, the general lesson remains good notwithstanding the changes in the methods of naval warfare. To disregard the teachings of these pages, to cut loose wholly from the traditions of the past, to revolutionize rather than to reform, to launch out boldly on new and untried plans, such a tendency undoubtedly exists in every generation. If at the present day it evinces unusual strength this is not to be wondered at in view of the change in propelling force and in the development of naval weapons. Capt. Mahan is not one of those who venture to affirm that the days of sail have no lesson for the days of steam. On the contrary, as he points out, there must always remain to be considered questions of discipline and organization; of the adaptation of means to ends; of the recognition not only of the possibilities but also of the limitations imposed upon a calling, upon a military organization, by the nature of the case, by the element in which it moves, by the force to which it owes its motion, by the skill or lack of skill with which its powers are used and its deficiencies made good. It is, indeed, only by considering the limitations as well as the possibilities of any form of warlike activity, whether it be a general plan of action—as, for instance, commerce destroying—or whether it be the use of a particular weapon, such as the ram—that correct conclusions can be reached as to the kind of men in natural capacities in acquired skill, in habits of thought and action, who are needed to use such weapons. The possibilities of the ram, for instance, are to be found in the consequences of a successful thrust; its limitations in the difficulties imposed by any lack of handiness, speed, or steering qualities in the ship carrying it or by the skill of the opponent in managing his own vessel and the weapons with which he is provided for counter-offence. If these limitations are carefully considered there will be little doubt how to answer the question as to the chance of a man, picked up at random, untrained for such encounters except by years of ordinary seagoing, reaching his aim when pitted against another who has at least given thought and had some professional training directed to the special purpose. Now the one sea weapon of the period of the French revolution was the gun, the hand-to-hand fight commonly coming into play only toward the end of an action, if at all. But the gun, considered as a weapon, cannot be separated from its carriage, nor this again from the ship which bears it. The effective use, therefore, of a gun required the coöperation of a skilful seaman and a skilful gunner. The ship and its guns together formed but one weapon, a moving battery which needed quick and delicate handling and accurate direction in all its parts. This moving battery had to be wielded by a living operator, knit into one by the dependence of all the parts upon the head and acting by a common impulse. These facts are obvious enough to professional men, but they are not easily recognized by outsiders, apt to ignore difficulties of which they have neither experience nor conception.

III.

The aim of the British Admiral, Lord Howe, in the naval campaign in May, 1794, was to capture the great fleet conveying breadstuffs from the United States to France. The merchantmen transporting the provisions were to be protected on the voyage by French ships of war, while their approach to the shores of Europe was to be covered by a sortie of a strong force from Brest and Rochefort. The convoying squadron of two ships of the line and three smaller vessels sailed from Brest in December, 1793, under the command of Rear Admiral Van Stabel, and on Feb. 12, 1794, anchored in Chesapeake Bay. On April 11 it sailed again for France, having under its charge one hundred and thirty merchant ships laden with breadstuffs and West Indian produce. On April 10 a squadron of five-sixths of the line, with some lighter vessels, put forth from Brest to protect the arrival of the convoy, and this force was followed on May 16 by twenty-five ships of the line under Rear-Admiral Villaret Joyeuse. On the British side, what was known as the Channel fleet, numbering thirty-four ships of the line and attended by fifteen frigates and smaller vessels, sailed from Spithead on May 2. It had under its charge 148 sail of merchantmen bound to Newfoundland and to the East and West Indies. Upon arriving off the Lizard Howe detached eight ships of the line to accompany the convoy, and with the twenty-six remaining ships proceeded to cruise in the Bay of Biscay across the probable track of the expected provision fleet from America. Some four hundred miles west of Ushant, on May 28, Howe came up with the main French fleet of war ships under Villaret. After several indecisive encounters and many interesting naval manœuvres, which are discussed in detail by Capt. Mahan, the final battle took place on June 1. In this battle Lord Howe won a great victory; nevertheless the French Admiral carried out his principal purpose, which was to assure the safe arrival of the provision fleet from America. Many years later Admiral Villaret was Governor of Martinique. When that island was taken by the British in 1809 he went to England as a passenger in a ship commanded by Capt. E. P. Brenton. This officer, in his naval history, states that Villaret told him that Robespierre's orders were to go to sea, and that if the convoys coming from the United States fell into Howe's hands his head should answer for it. Therefore he avoided action as long as possible, and endeavored to draw Lord Howe out of the path of the convoy. The loss of the war ships taken was to him a matter of comparative indifference. "While your Admiral amused himself taking them, I saved my convoy and I saved my head."

IV.

Next to Nelson, the most famous of the English naval commanders of this epoch, was Sir John Jervis, created Earl St. Vincent for his memorable victory off the cape of that name. In this battle, which took place on Feb. 14, 1797, the British had fifteen ships and the Spanish twenty-seven. Both Nelson and Collingwood were Captains under Jervis, and bore distinguished parts in the engagement. In the popular eye Nelson was the most striking figure in this battle, because, with a seventy-four, he carried first a Spanish ship of eighty guns, and then another of 112 guns; but Capt. Mahan points out that this splendid exhibition of fighting capacity on Nelson's part detracts in no way from the credit due to the Commander-in-Chief; any more than it did from Nelson's own fame that the Captain of the leading ship at the Nile conceived on the spur of the moment the happy thought of passing inside the French line. To Jervis alone belongs the honor of attacking a greatly preponderant force, as well as of the correct and adequate combination by which he hoped to snatch victory from superior numbers. He was fortunate, of course, in having such a lieutenant; but the whole responsibility and the whole original plan was his. To him, too, was primarily due the admirable efficiency of the English fleet which removed from his enterprise the reproach of rashness. In the judgment of the author of this narrative peculiar credit is due to Jervis because at a critical conjuncture he could rise above his own anxieties and local responsibilities to think of the needs of his country, and was willing to risk his own reputation to support her prestige. As the dawn of morning light shone on the Spanish fleet Jervis was heard to say, "A victory is very essential to England at this moment." It has indeed been said that a further pursuit of the fleet so disgracefully beaten would have increased the British triumph; but Jervis was not the man to risk a substantial success securely held for a doubtful further gain. The victory essential to Great Britain had been won and the worthlessness of the Spanish navy had been laid bare. It was enough that fifteen British ships had dashed into the midst of twenty-seven enemies, had collared and dragged out four of the biggest and severely handled the rest. With St. Vincent began a series of naval achievements which threw the great deeds of earlier days into obscurity.

V.

At the battle of the Nile, which took place on Aug. 1, 1798, the French and English were equally matched, each having thirteen ships, but the French Admiral, Brueys, although a gallant seaman, was no match for Nelson, either in respect to strategy or tactics. This battle was one of the most complete of naval victories and among the most decisive in its influence on the general course of events. It unquestionably caused the collapse of Bonaparte's plans in Egypt and compelled him to return to France. In this engagement the French lost no fewer than eleven out of thirteen ships of the line, and it was Nelson's belief that, had he not been wounded, not a boat would have escaped. The particular circumstance under which the British attack was undertaken, the admirable skill, as well as conduct, shown by all the captains, and the scientific character of the tactical combination adopted, unite with the conclusiveness of the issue to cast a peculiar lustre upon this victory of Nelson's. Lord Howe said to Capt. Berry that the battle of the Nile "stood unparalleled and singular in this respect that every captain distinguished himself." It has been disputed how far Nelson could claim the credit of the bold manœuvre whereby the leading English ship passing inside of the French line disclosed to her successors the open path through which the operation of doubling on the enemy could be most effectually performed. Into this discussion Capt. Mahan does not enter, but he deems it in entire keeping with Nelson's character that after considering all probable positions and ascertaining that his Captains understood his views, he should with generous confidence have left all the details of immediate action with them. With regard to the Battle of the Nile it has been said that with better gunnery on the part of the French, disaster must have resulted to the attacking force. To Capt. Mahan, however, considering the direction of the wind and the method of Nelson's approach, it seems probable that even had the French gunnery been much better than it was, the British ships would yet have reached the stations which they took; and once there, the tactical combination adopted would have given them the victory, though it might have been more dearly bought.

VI.

Capt. Mahan devotes the greater part of a chapter to the Irish expedition of 1796. The widespread discontent in Ireland which was intensified in the Protestant North was well known to the Directory, with which through the French Minister at Hamburg Irish agents had been in communication as early as April, 1796. Another agent, Wolfe Tone, had in the first months of the year arrived in Paris from the United States with a similar mission. Their efforts were seconded by the powerful influence of Gen. Hoche, who had in other fields of action shown military ability of the highest order; and who, having established his claim upon the gratitude of his country by the pacification of La Vendée and Britany, was now in command of the army in that quarter. The proposed invasion was consequently resolved upon. It depended avowedly upon the coöperation of the disaffected inhabitants of Ireland; but Hoche did not make the mistake of trusting to them for the most serious part of the work. No less than 20,000 troops were to be embarked, and, as the General recognized that the difficulty would by no means be over when Ireland was reached—that the British navy, if successfully eluded by the expedition, would nevertheless seriously interfere with subsequent supplies—he insisted upon carrying with him as large supplies as possible and consequently as many ships as could be assembled in Brest. Never was an expedition, destined to encounter extraordinary risks and to brave one of the stormiest of seas, more favored than this was at the outset by the elements and by the mismanagement of its enemies. For nearly six weeks before it sailed the winds prevailed from the east, and during the passage in midwinter fine weather with favorable winds lasted until the bulk of the fleet reached the Irish coast. Nor was there encountered an enemy's vessel to take advantage of the crowded and inefficient condition of the French fleet. Like Bonaparte's expedition to Egypt, though from other causes, Hoche's ships passed to their destination unseen by any foe powerful enough to molest them. It was an extraordinary circumstance that of the whole large fleet the vessel containing Hoche and the French Admiral was almost alone in her failure to reach the Irish coast. The success of the expedition depended on the ability of the French ships to make the thirty miles intervening between the entrance and the head of Bantry Bay. Unluckily, when they reached the entrance the wind changed and blew off shore, so that only a fraction of the force, unprovided with artillery, could have been landed. The collapse of the projected invasion was due entirely to accident and not to any foresight or efficiency on the part of the British navy. Whatever may be thought of the French prospects of ultimate success in the conquest or deliverance of Ireland—a matter of pure speculation dependent upon many conditions rather political and economical than military—it cannot be disputed that the French had succeeded in crossing the sea and almost reaching their point of destination not only in spite of the British navy, but without even seeing it. On Dec. 21 the bulk of the expedition was at the mouth of Bantry Bay. Not till the 22d did Colpoys, commanding the fleet detailed to watch off Brest, know that the French had actually sailed; and then he did not know in what direction. Bridport at Portsmouth received the news on the same or, possibly, on the previous day. Not till Dec. 31 was it known in London that the enemy had actually appeared off the Irish coast, and at that time Bridport's fleet had not even sailed. Only continued bad weather, and that ahead, prevented the landing which even the incompetent French commander Bouvet would not have hesitated to make under better conditions. Had no other harm resulted, the capture of Cork, only forty-five miles distant, was certain. "We proposed to make a race for Cork as though the devil were in us," wrote Wolfe Tone in his journal; and how severe the blow would have been may be inferred from the fact that in that place were collected stores and supplies to the value of a million and a half sterling, including the provisions for feeding the navy during the next year. On the whole, our author does not hesitate to denounce as ignominious the failure of the British navy with its large and superior forces to prevent the Hoche expedition from reaching Ireland. The failure has the effect of demonstrating, what is too often overlooked by the general reader, that all the British naval commanders of the period by no means conformed to the standards of efficiency established by Jervis, Nelson, and Collingwood. If the British Channel fleet had continued under the command of such men as Colpoys and Bridport, the invasion of England projected by Bonaparte might have been carried out.

A Hermit's House and Treasures Burned.

From the Detroit Free Press.

HOLLAND, Jan. 11.—Last night the house of Thomas Purdy, about three miles from this city, was burned. Mr. Purdy was an old widower and had led a hermit life there for years. His great passion was the collection of curios. He had a museum of ores, minerals, stones, shells, Indian relics, birds, and animals, for which he was offered $3,000, but it is said the collection was worth thrice that. Only a small part of this collection was saved.

A CURIOUS LITERARY SHOP.

Where Unknown Authors Turn Out Cheap Stories, Wholesale.

The origin of the very cheap and doubtful stories called dime novels and of the matter in the very cheap family papers is more or less of a mystery to most people. The Deadwood Dick series and books of that character are usually without the names of publishing houses or bear the names of publishing houses not in existence. The authors of these stories are unknown to the world, and this kind of literature is printed with as much concealment as if it were New York green goods.

Down in an east side street, near one of the large and well-known cheap publishing houses, is the birthplace of much of this kind of literature. Up stairs in an old-fashioned, red-brick building are the offices and machinery for creating and publishing a yellow back and stereotyping the matter that goes into many of the story papers that find their way to every rural and hamlet Post Office in the country. Not only are stories printed here and made into pot metal for the cheap papers elsewhere, but the building contains offices for the authors of the new story and the "boilers down" or rehashers of the old story.

In two or three small rooms are a dozen or so of men seated at desks, maintaining the semblance of authors and thinkers. Some of them wear glasses and hold the blue pencil behind their ears and labor with long manuscripts, while others are running through printed slips or old story papers hunting for the base of a new plot. Many of these stories are condensed or rehashed from others that have already had a large circulation.

The most of the stories, however, are bought by this concern from the large publishing house near by and other cheap story publishing houses. Tons of cheap and trifling fiction annually accumulate at these large publishing houses, and much of it is of no use to them. This shop or mill has been created to utilize it by putting it upon the market, and that accounts in a large measure why there is so much of this kind of literature. The demand has been largely created by the facilities for making the cheap and very doubtful story. A publisher in speaking of this place said: "Not one person in twenty who writes stories for publication by the cheaper houses ever sees himself in print, and not one in fifty who aims higher. It seems to me, at times, that almost the whole population of the country is trying to write stories. Nine-tenths of these stories are blood curdling or are total nonsense, and this shop gets the choice of the rubbish that no reputable house could afford to put its name to.

"This shop is perhaps the only publishing house in the city absolutely independent of the author and writer. It is in literature the ragpicker and the ash-barrel sifter. Some of its stereotypes for family story papers are creditable, however, as those publications go.

"This shop is for obvious reasons unknown to the public. Being independent of the story writer, the concern desires to avoid his presence and persistence. The story writer who has failed everywhere else would come here rather than have his tale never see the light. I know that some story writers in New York who have failed to do even creditable work have drifted into writing cheap 'rot' for a living. Then, too, this sort of literature is never advertised in places of intelligence. Intelligent prejudice is against it, even if its circulation does not violate the law."

A CONQUEROR AGAINST HARD ODDS.

Marvin Clark, the Blind Newspaper Writer of New York City.

Any afternoon of the week one may see in the reading room of the Press Club a middle-aged man with a slight gray moustache sitting at a table, smoking a cigar and listening with an air of close attention to a boy who is reading a newspaper in an undertone. If a member of the club lounges up to the table and says, "Hello, Marvin," the listener will turn his head with a smile and say: "Why, how are you?" adding the name of the man, whether Smith, Jones, or Robinson.

Unless you are a better judge of such matters than the ordinary human being, you will not notice that the man addressed as Marvin is blind. The longer you watch him the less likely you will be to see it. But the man is blind, and has been blind for nearly five years, so blind that he can only distinguish light from darkness and cannot in the least make out form or color. He is Marvin R. Clark, who although blind yet writes newspaper articles that are bought and printed and read, that command more attention than the efforts of hundreds of men who hover about the New York press.

For over thirty years Marvin Clark was a newspaper man with as good a pair of eyes as any of them. He was reporter, copy reader, managing editor, in the very heart of the rush that surges about that busiest of places, the modern newspaper office. Then his sight began to fail. It was a gradual dimming, first a blur, that fades into a mere idea of colored form, into form without color, into the faintest of lights and shadows, into total darkness. Then after a long period of rest the mere perception of night and day and darkness and light came back to him, like the first faint flicker of straggling light seen far back in the depths of a cave. With this the improvement stopped, and, aside from the hope this little improvement gave, the darkness might as well have been complete.

Of all the misfortunes that can befall a human being, that which came upon Clark is the worst. From being an actor in the most varied, least monotonous, most breathless life a man can lead, he became a man in the midst of the pitchy darkness of a night that is unpierced by light, that has no dawning. He could hear, with an acuteness painfully sharpened, the noise, the tumult of the rush about him. But he was helpless, must sit with folded hands, must rely utterly upon those about him.

His training had all been for newspaper work. There was no occupation to which he could turn his attention. He was not rich and he was not the sort of man to sit content a useless burden upon others. So he set to work to adapt himself to his changed conditions. He resolved to continue his newspaper work, accept the handicap fate had put upon him and continue in the race. He bought a typewriter and in a few minutes learned the keyboard so that with a little care he could strike whatever letter he wished, not through having the letters raised, because raised letters would have cut the ends of his fingers, but by learning the distances between each key and the edge of the board. Then he hired a boy to read to him and was ready to begin newspaper work.

Each day this boy reads the newspapers to him—the headlines of all articles, the full text of some, a few paragraphs of many. Thus he keeps himself perfectly informed of what is happening in the world each day. Added to this is the gossip he hears from his friends, the newspaper men. He is thus able to comment upon the news or to store up what he has learned for future use. In his thirty years of experience in New York newspaper work he has gathered a vast amount of information about men and things. Further, he has a still greater amount of knowledge of where things are to be got, if he does not know the details or remember accurately.

Through these sources he is ready to furnish special articles upon all sorts of subjects. The newspaper special article is a most important feature of the newspaper, especially of the Sunday edition. Mr. Clark can write interesting specials upon things that were and also upon things that are. He has only to think of a good subject. If there is reading to be done, his boy can do it for him. If a man is to be interviewed, his boy can lead him to the man. Were it not that this roundabout method took too much time he could do the routine newspaper news work.

He has learned the typewriter so well that he makes it turn off for him copy that is clean and clear and most legible, incomparably better than the copy that formerly flowed from the end of his pencil. At first the newspaper editors were a bit shy of his writings because it seemed incongruous for a blind man to do newspaper work, when the newspaper is above all things a record of things seen. But latterly they are getting used to him, and now his articles appear regularly in many New York and Brooklyn papers.

He has borne his affliction with a courage and cheerfulness that is amazing, that shows the resources of his character. From the first he faced the situation as if he could see it, and he has never staggered under the several blows that have struck him—the beginning of the failure of his sight, the total darkness, the announcement of a great specialist that he would never see again. "What is the use of complaining?" said he. "No one but a blind man can begin to understand what this darkness means—this total dependence upon others. But I must work. I have to keep my mind occupied with my work and, that passes my days. Latterly I have been troubled with insomnia. Each morning at 3 o'clock I wake up and can sleep no more. What can I do? I cannot read. No one can come and talk to me at that time. I must lie there in the darkness, helpless and alone, waiting for daylight and the boy who is eyes to me. That is my greatest hardship, and I must confess that sometimes my philosophy is not equal to it."

Mr. Clark has also turned his attention to the writing of fiction stories. He has written several and has had good success with them, and he hopes, as he gets accustomed to thinking in that line, to improve his work up to a good standard. He has the necessary equipments of a good style and a good imagination, and he can evolve his plots out of the storehouse of his excellent memory, which is full of the lights of former days.